

**CONTACT OR PROXIMITY PRINTING USING A MAGNIFIED MASK IMAGE**

**ABSTRACT**

5    **[0083]**       Improvements in the fabrication of integrated circuits are driven by the  
decrease of the size of the features printed on the wafers. Current lithography techniques  
limits have been extended through the use of phase-shifting masks, off-axis illumination,  
and proximity effect correction. More recently, liquid immersion lithography has been  
proposed as a way to extend even further the limits of optical lithography. This invention  
10   described a methodology based on contact or proximity printing using a projection lens to  
define the image of the mask onto the wafer. As the imaging is performed in a solid  
material, larger refractive indices can be obtained and the resolution of the imaging  
system can be increased.